

From Ethnic Fear to Pragmatic Inclusiveness? Political Community Building in the Baltic States (1988-2004)

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S U M M A R Y : This article traces the processes of political community building in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia from the times of national revival to accession to the European Union. In addition, it analyses international interventions — that is, the attempts of international actors to influence the policies of political inclusiveness and local responses to these attempts, including the development of national integration policies. Drawing on the author's case studies published in *Taming Nationalism? Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States* (2005), the goal of this article is to revisit recent historical events that are salient in the context of ongoing ethnic tensions.

K e y w o r d s : POLITICAL COMMUNITY, POLITICAL INCLUSIVENESS, MINORITY RIGHTS, CITIZENSHIP, NATIONAL INTEGRATION, ETHNIC TENSION.

To many, the Baltic States represent cases where exclusionary nationalisms were successfully “tamed”: responding to international pressure before expansion of the European Union (EU) in 2004, the governments made their laws more inclusive and more minority friendly, and exclusionary ethnic nations were transformed into political communities. However, various measures of inclusiveness and tolerance suggest that exclusionary, divisive “us” versus “them” logic has been alive and well in the most recent decades. These observations raise the following questions: were adequate conditions for the development of inclusive political communities created during the late 1980s and 1990s (prior to EU expansion)? Were international actors successful in communicating their expectations regarding political inclusiveness? Were these expectations embraced by local political actors?

To gain insight into these questions, I will revisit my case study published in *Taming Nationalism: Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States* (2005). Tracing the ways in which Baltic nationalisms were “tamed” with the help of outsiders, the main argument of the book was that minority-friendly policies did not guarantee that tolerant communities would be created in democratising multi-ethnic countries. The creation of a tolerant political community requires the ability to evaluate the past critically, which

cannot be achieved without functioning State institutions and good relations between the State and the former colonial power.

Drawing on *Taming Nationalism*, the first part of this paper will retrace the process of Baltic political community building during the late 1980s and early 1990s, focusing on political inclusiveness — primarily on the struggles regarding citizenship policies and concepts of citizenship. The second part will analyse international interventions with regard to this issue — that is, the attempts of international actors to influence the policies of political inclusiveness and concepts of citizenship, and local responses to these attempts. This paper will conclude with a brief analysis of the national integration policies that were developed by the Baltic States prior to 2004.

Constructing the “rebirth” of nations in the late 1980s and early 1990s

In the late 1980s, in spite of the activities of *Interfront* in Latvia, *Interdvizheniye* in Estonia and *Yedinstvo* in Lithuania (pro-Soviet groups created to counter Baltic nationalisms) and the opposition of some ethnic enclaves, significant numbers of Baltic residents supported independence. In March 1990, elections to the Supreme Soviets (i.e. Parliaments) were held in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. These were the first multiparty elections held in the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), and, according to Misiunas and Taagepera (1993: 330), each was the equivalent of a referendum on independence.

The process was exhaustively inclusive: even Soviet military personnel stationed in the Baltic States and non-native Communist party members were allowed to participate. The secessionist nationalist forces were victorious, and in the spring of 1991 plebiscites on independence were held. Again, all residents were allowed to participate, and again the answer was a resounding “yes”. In Estonia, 78 % of those who voted cast a “yes” vote (Smith 2002: 59). In Latvia, this number was 73.68 % (Pabriks and Purs 2002: 63–64), and in Lithuania it was 90 % (Lane 2002: 123).

The political landscape of Estonia was shaped by two major pro-independence groups: *Rahvarinne* (the Popular Front) and *Eesti Kodanike Komiteed* (the Estonian Citizens’ Committees), which was renamed *Eesti Kongress* (Congress of Estonia) in 1990. The main difference between the two organisations was the way in which each saw the relationship of the future Estonian State with its Soviet past. The Popular Front was open to the idea of changing the existing Soviet institutions gradually and then declaring independence. In contrast, the Citizens’ Committees (commonly called the Restorationists) demanded an immediate, complete break with the

State's Soviet past. The goal of the Restorationists was to restore the pre-Second World War republic, declare Estonia an occupied country, and demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops (Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997: 90). Neither group excluded the possibility that the future political community might include those who migrated to Estonia during the Soviet occupation. However, the Restorationists wanted to ensure that those who were granted Estonian citizenship were fluent in the Estonian language.

The debate over citizenship became focused on the survival of the nation. Those who argued for restrictive citizenship laws (first and foremost, the Restorationists, some of whom had been the victims of Soviet repression) noted that the Baltic States fell under the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which prohibits the deportation or transfer of members of an occupying power's population into territory it occupies during war. Thus, they argued, Estonia should be permitted to "decolonise" its territory.¹ For some, "decolonisation" implied disenfranchisement, while for others it meant the resettlement of Estonia's Russian speakers.

The opponents (most of whom were members of the Popular Front and former Communists) argued that the retroactive application of any requirements for citizenship was "illegitimate, illegal and undemocratic", that the alienation of Estonia's Russian speakers was "not in our national interest" and that the restoration of the Citizenship Law of 1938 would be criticised by the West (Kask 1994: 382–383). These arguments were, however, undermined by the results of a vote organised by the Interregional Soviet (an organization closely related to the International Front), which asked the people of Estonia if they would like to remain within the Soviet Union. In 1991, in Tallinn, Narva, and Kohtla-Järve (areas with large numbers of Russian speakers), 92–96 % of the survey participants (approximately 330,000 people) said "yes" to staying in the USSR (Hallik 1996: 101). This enabled the Restorationists to argue that many Russian speakers "have been loudly bellicose against the Estonian state. And now those people only remember their rights" (Kask 1994: 383).

After more than a year of debate (1990–91), those favouring restrictive citizenship laws triumphed. In February 1992, the old Citizenship Law from 1938 was reinstated. Those who held Estonian citizenship before 16 June 1940, and their descendants (approximately 900,000 people, or approximately 58 % of the population), automatically became citizens of post-Soviet Estonia. The naturalisation process for other residents (more than 400,000 people, or

¹ In 1993, Jüri Estam, a member of the Congress of Estonia, established a Decolonisation Foundation. The goal of this foundation was to pursue the process of "decolonisation", which for some radical Restorationists meant the expulsion of Estonia's Russian speakers. See CSCE (Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe) (1993: 8).

approximately 26 % of the population) included the following requirements: residence in the territory of Estonia for at least the previous two years, a one-year waiting period, proficiency in the Estonian language, and an oath of loyalty to the State.

In many ways, the dynamics of political community building in Latvia was similar to that in Estonia. In the late 1980s, Latvia's political landscape was shaped by *Latvijas Tautas fronte* (Latvia's Popular Front, a nationalist movement) and *Pilsoņu komitejas* (Citizens' Committees). Both movements supported Latvia's independence, but the Citizens' Committees demanded an immediate break with the country's Soviet past (Jubulis 2001: 81–82). The Popular Front was willing to integrate at least some institutions from Soviet times into independent Latvia. Both movements supported the restoration of citizenship to pre-war citizens and their descendants, but the Citizens' Committees refused to grant citizenship to those persons who had migrated to Latvia during the Soviet period. The Popular Front was willing to incorporate Soviet migrants into the political community, but only through naturalisation. Unlike in Estonia, where the members of the Estonian Citizens' Committees influenced the shape of the future political community and became the leading force in nationalist politics, in Latvia, public support for the Citizens' Committees started to decline in 1991, when the Supreme Council of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic declared independence (Dreifelds 1996: 74). After 1991, the Restorationist vision was pursued by the Supreme Council, which was dominated by members of the Popular Front.

In October 1991, the Supreme Council restored Latvian citizenship only to those who had been citizens of Latvia in 1940 and their descendants. This left more than 700,000 people, or approximately 28 % of Latvia's residents, without Latvian citizenship.² Most of these people were Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians.³

Dainis Ivans (1996: 44), the first leader of Latvia's Popular Front, described his position regarding citizenship as follows:

[In 1991], I continued to believe that citizenship may *not only* be restored, but it also needs to be made available to non-citizens through naturalization. Let their choice, their knowledge of the [Latvian] language, and their loyalty be the decisive factors.

² In 1993, when the registration of citizens and non-citizens took place, 617,443 people registered as non-citizens (CSCE, 1993: 5).

³ In Latvia, the first language of persons who identified themselves as ethnic Latvians and ethnic Russians by and large corresponded to their ethnic identity. The majority of Ukrainians and Belorussians identified Russian as their first language. In 2000, this tendency increased (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Naturalization Board of the Republic of Latvia, 2001: 93).

Evans' focus on "individual choice" for non-citizens reflected the position of the Popular Front. To counter the fears of Russian speakers, the representatives of the Popular Front stressed that the future political community would be united by democracy and human rights.⁴ Thus, although the Popular Front did not intend to extend automatic citizenship to all residents, its political discourse created expectations of democratic inclusiveness among Latvia's Russian speakers. At the same time, the Popular Front promised Latvians that they "would again be masters of their own land" (quoted in Green 1999: 510). By using such a discourse, the leaders of the Popular Front created expectations of ethnic democracy among Latvians.

It took longer for Latvia than Estonia to adopt a new citizenship law. Latvian politicians argued that the Supreme Council did not have the legitimacy necessary to lay the foundations of a new state. (The Council was elected in 1990, when Latvia was still part of the Soviet Union, and 58 out of 201, or 29 % all seats were occupied by conservative Communists (Stukulis-Eglitis 2002: 55). Latvian politicians waited for the withdrawal of the Russian Army and introduced the first citizenship law only in 1994, after the first Parliament had been elected.

As in Estonia, the memory of the terror carried out under Josef Stalin and the Russification policies pursued during the Soviet period became part of the debates on citizenship. A restrictive citizenship law came to be seen as justice — as restitution for past suffering. In February 1993, Georgs Andrejevs, who then served as Latvia's Foreign Minister, attributed his country's demographical situation to large-scale population transfers and called for "affirmative action for Latvians to compensate them for the discrimination they have experienced in their own country". He went on to say that "we will not sacrifice our country for the democratic rules of the Western world, which are currently simply not suitable for our situation" (CSCE 1993a: 8).

Predictably, the proposed Citizenship Law, which was modified numerous times to please foreign critics, triggered large protests from right-wing political groups, which accused the ruling coalition of centre-right parties of an "inability to explain the real [demographical] situation in Latvia and the status of its residents [i.e. Russian-speaking residents] to international institutions" (Baltic News Service (BNS) 1994). During the debate over the ruling coalition's proposed Citizenship Law, protesters marched in front of the Parliament, demanding that the "Soviet colonists" be repatriated (BNS 1994a).

⁴ In 1998, Boris Tsilevitch, a famous minority rights activist, remembered that he stressed democracy and human rights in his speeches (Ginkel 2002: 425). Human rights and democracy were mentioned in the documents of the Popular Front and other speeches. For example, Janis Peters, a leader of the National Revival Movement, called on the peoples of different nationalities to be united by the forces of democratisation (Peters 1989: 10).

Despite these protests, a Citizenship Law incorporating the suggestions of various international institutions was passed by the Latvian Parliament on 22 July 1994. The law still claimed to restore the pre-1940 citizenship body, but it included a schedule for the naturalisation of non-citizens and eased the requirements for naturalisation. Instead of the earlier quota system, which was aimed at preserving ethnic proportions, a more liberal “windows policy” was introduced. This policy was based on a schedule for naturalisation; all who qualified for naturalisation could apply during a given year. Different categories of non-citizens were eligible to apply for naturalisation during a period from 1995 until the early twenty-first century. The spouses of Latvian citizens, citizens of Lithuania and Estonia, and persons born in Latvia had to be naturalised first. The law included language and residence requirements, as well as requiring knowledge of the Constitution, and the taking of an oath of loyalty. International organisations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE, also known as the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE), praised the Latvian Government for creating a functioning Naturalization Board to apply the law (United States of America Department of State 1997).

Unlike Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania did not experience intense international monitoring of its minority policies and citizenship laws. However, citizenship and minority rights were widely discussed by the members of *Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sajūdis* (Lithuanian Reform Movement). During the first meeting of *Sajūdis* in 1988, the activists of this movement argued that the citizens of a future Lithuanian state should be able to speak Lithuanian. According to a resolution adopted during this meeting, Lithuanian citizenship was inseparable from the “determination to permanently live in Lithuania, respect for Lithuania’s history, culture, and recognition of the Lithuanian language as the state language” (Sinkevičius 2002: 100). The principles outlined in this resolution were similar to the principles embraced by the emerging ethnic democracies in Latvia and Estonia. These principles — language, common history and culture (instead of residence within the boundaries of the Soviet Republic and/or allegiance to a new Constitution) — became the foundations of the emerging ethnic democracies.

In July and August 1989, the Lithuanian public debated the citizenship resolution mentioned above. As in Latvia and Estonia, the issue of “colonists” came up during these debates. According to a citizenship proposal prepared by the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR) on 28 July 28 1989 and released to the mass media on 6 August of the same year, those persons who had lived in Lithuania for at least five years and had a permanent job or legal income in the country should automatically receive Lithuanian citizenship (Sinkevičius 2002: 105). Some *Sajūdis* activists denounced this proposal as an obstacle to the full elimination of the consequences

of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (Sinkevičius 2002: 106). Similarly to the Estonian case, the activists argued that Lithuania fell under the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which prohibited the deportation or transfer of members of an occupying power's population into territory it occupies during war. *Sąjūdis* activists argued that the state-engineered arrival of non-Lithuanians during the Soviet period was illegal. Consequently, those who came to Lithuania during this time should not automatically be granted citizenship. Radical nationalists, such as the members of *Jaunoji Lietuva* (Young Lithuania) were especially opposed to granting Lithuanian citizenship to those persons who had migrated to Lithuania during the Soviet period. The members of the *Lietuvos Laisvės Lyga* (Lithuanian Freedom League) announced that the entire Russian nation, including the Russians in Lithuania, should be held responsible for “the historical injustice inflicted by the Soviet Union on the Lithuanians” (Novagrockienė and Jankauskas 1998: 33).

Critical decisions affecting the future shape of Lithuania's political community were made by the moderate wing of *Sąjūdis* and the representatives of the government of the LSSR. During one meeting on 16 October 1989, the members of the Supreme Soviet and *Sąjūdis* agreed that all permanent residents of Lithuania would be entitled to Lithuanian citizenship. The earlier requirement of five years residency was officially dropped on 3 November 1989, when a new Law on Citizenship was passed by the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. This law embraced the so-called “zero option” and extended citizenship to all permanent residents of Lithuania (Sinkevičius 2002: 108).

Comparing Lithuania's Citizenship Law with Latvia's Citizenship Law, Mark Jubulis points out that the political context within which Lithuania adopted its Citizenship Law played a major role. Thus, Jubulis (2001: 110–110) argues:

The more inclusive approach should not be interpreted as a sign that the Lithuanian nationalists (*Sąjūdis*) were “less nationalistic” than their Latvian and Estonian counterparts ... but rather as a sign that the Lithuanian Communists under Brazauskas were *more nationalistic* than the Communist governments in Latvia and Estonia in 1989.

The decision to grant citizenship to permanent residents of Lithuania instead of merely restoring citizenship to pre-war Lithuanian citizens and their descendants was accepted by 38 % of ethnic Lithuanians (Rose and Maley 1994: 33). Ethnic Lithuanians were less supportive of the idea of granting voting rights only to pre-war citizens and their descendants than ethnic Latvians and ethnic Estonians. According to a survey conducted in September–October 1993, 12 % of ethnic Lithuanians, 2 % of Russian Lithuanians and 1 % of Polish Lithuanians thought that only pre-1940 citizens and their descendants should have the right to vote in elections to

Parliament. In the other Baltic States, however, 49 % of ethnic Latvians and 44 % of ethnic Estonians thought that only pre-1940 citizens and their families should have this right (Rose and Maley 1994).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, worries about the potential “disloyalty” of eastern Lithuania’s Poles were similar to the public sentiments expressed in Latvia and Estonia about their Russian minorities. In 1989, Jan Ciechanowicz, a Polish deputy of the Supreme Council of the LSSR from eastern Lithuania, argued that the creation of “real equality for ethnic Poles [when compared to other ethnic groups] in the USSR will be achieved when there are autonomies in Lithuania, Latvia, Byelorussia, and other parts of the USSR” (Ботян и Заровский 1989). Ciechanowicz and some other politicians in eastern Lithuania promoted the idea of a “Polish National Territorial Unit” within the Soviet Union. *Sąjūdis* interpreted their willingness to create an autonomous pro-Soviet territorial unit in Lithuania as a lack of loyalty towards the emerging nation State. These fears were reflected in debates on minority rights and the role of the Lithuanian language in the emerging nation state. An Ethnic Affairs Commission created by *Sąjūdis* in 1988, which promised to focus on minority issues in Lithuania, was primarily interested in strengthening the status of the Lithuanian language and establishing schools beyond the borders of the country (Sirutavičius 1998: 11).

In the late 1980s an argument about “Polonised” Lithuanians and the need to “re-Lithuanise” eastern Lithuania was put forward by the social movement *Vilnija*. This movement, founded in 1988, attempted to counteract the perceived threat of growing Polish influence in eastern Lithuania. *Vilnija* wanted to “re-Lithuanise” eastern Lithuania by getting rid of “alien” (i.e. Polish or Russian) textbooks, schoolteachers, symbols and other aspects of “foreign” states. *Vilnija*’s ideas about the need to “re-Lithuanianise” eastern Lithuania were quite popular during the initial stage of community building. Like in Latvia and Estonia, such views about a “weakened” nation were based on ethnic fear. This construct was challenged during the next stage of political community building, when (especially in the case of Latvia and Estonia) policies and processes were subjected to intense international scrutiny.

International pressure and nationalist impulses

Restrictive approaches to political community building in Estonia and Latvia and the desire of some forces in Lithuania to “re-Lithuanise” ethnic Poles received a lot of international criticism. In 1992, several human rights groups, including Helsinki Watch, criticised the Restorationist Citizenship Law for creating a population divided into Estonian citizens and mostly Russian non-citizens. Western political scientists argued that the exclusion of “such a

large part of the inhabitants from equal citizen rights, as is currently the case in Latvia and Estonia, obviously conflicts with a liberal perception of democracy” (Norgaard, Hingsaul, Johansennsen and Willumsen 1996: 204).

A plethora of international organisations — the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe (CoE), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the EU, and OSCE — became involved in Estonia and Latvia to pursue preventive diplomacy and to promote liberal policies. It was estimated that during the period 1991–1994 there were 15 human rights missions to Estonia (Ozolins 2003: 218).

Given the presence of Russian troops in Estonia and Latvia (they left only in mid-1990s), the Estonian and Latvian Governments welcomed international attention. However, there was a widespread fear among Western governments and international organisations that ethnic relations in Estonia and Latvia might “escalate to the point of threatening European stability” (Birckenbach 2000).

To alleviate that fear, the governments in Estonia and Latvia were responsive to suggestions to make their laws affecting the local Russian-speaking population more liberal. Yet, given Russia’s use of human rights rhetoric to achieve geopolitical objectives, as well as the population of both countries’ memory of the recent Soviet past, which they considered to be an occupation, there was a constant tension between the attempts by international actors to support minority rights and the attempts by Estonia and Latvia to preserve what were seen as endangered national identities. This tension can be described as follows: firstly, laws to preserve national identity were created. Then, responding to international pressure, these laws were changed. To counteract the impact of the altered laws, a different set of laws to preserve national identity was adopted. Again, these laws were changed under international pressure, and so on (Semjonov 1998).

Political developments in Estonia in 1993–2003 closely followed this pattern. In January 1995, the Citizenship Law was made stricter. The residency requirement for those who had entered Estonia after 1992 was changed from two to five years, the requirement to know the Constitution and the Citizenship Law was spelled out, and the language requirement was tightened.⁵ This did not prevent Estonia from receiving a recommendation by

⁵ In February 1992, the language requirement for citizenship was not very strict. Active knowledge of only about 1,500 words of Estonian was required. The idea was to accelerate the process of integration (understood as learning the language) by offering “a carrot” — citizenship. See Pettai (1996). Following the 1995 law, the language ability examination included tests of aural and written comprehension, and writing and speaking ability. Each part was considered completed when approximately 60 % of the answers were correct. Aural comprehension included official statements and announcements, news, description of events, and explanations. Conversation included expressing opinions.

the EU Commission in July 1997 to be invited to start accession negotiations. However, the EU Commission informed Estonia that there was still a lack of measures to promote the collective rights of ethnic minorities, that the Citizenship Law was still too restrictive, and that non-citizens were still subject to discrimination (Gelažis 2003: 65).

One contentious suggestion on how to speed up the process of integration came from the OSCE, and was supported by the EU as well as the United States of America. This suggestion was to grant citizenship to children under the age of 15 who had been born in independent Estonia to non-citizens. Hoping for further progress in obtaining EU membership, the Estonian Government decided to submit the legislation incorporating this suggestion to the Estonian Parliament. This move was made strategically on 16 December 1997, just days ahead of a key EU summit in Luxembourg that officially identified the States for the first round of enlargement. This decision was welcomed by the United States of America, which said that "Estonia now has acted on all thirty recommendations made by Max van der Stoel [the High Commissioner of the OSCE] in 1994", van der Stoel himself, and the EU (ETA News Release 1997).

The decision to amend the Citizenship Law prompted the Estonian Parliament to adopt several laws aimed at strengthening the status of the Estonian language and the Estonian nation. In December 1998 (the same month when the Citizenship Law was amended), the Estonian Parliament amended the Language Law, the Parliament Election Act, and the Local Government Election Act. These laws required Members of Parliament and elected officials in local government to be fluent in the Estonian language. The proponents of the law knew that it was naive to hope that these language requirements would increase the willingness of aliens to study the language, however, the law "had a symbolic meaning [to them] nevertheless" (Jarne 1998). The Estonians understood this move as compensation after Parliament had made the Citizenship Law more liberal under international pressure (Jarve 2002: 96).

In 1998, after intense international pressure and lively domestic debate, the Law on Citizenship was also revised in Latvia. Citizenship became available to all children born to non-citizens residing in Latvia after August 1991.⁶ The "windows policy" was abolished, allowing all adult non-citizens to apply immediately for citizenship if they passed history and language

⁶ According to the amendment (Section 3.1, "Citizenship of a Child Born in Latvia after 21 August 1991 to Persons who are Stateless Persons or Non-Citizens"), until the moment a child born in Latvia after 21 August 1991 reached the age of 15, his or her parents had to submit an application to obtain citizenship. If the parents decided not to do so, then the child could apply for Latvian citizenship when he or she turned 15 (Republic of Latvia, 1998).

exams. The EU welcomed the change. Similar to the Estonian case, the desire to join the EU was the main reason why Latvia agreed to make changes to its citizenship law. Geopolitical considerations affected the way that Latvian politicians viewed the amendments. Andrejs Pantelejevs, Chairman of Latvia's Way (a major political party), argued that Latvia's relations with Russia were "at the critical stage", and that the only way to meet Latvia's security needs was to speed up integration into European institutions. Amending the Citizenship Law was necessary for this integration (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Monitoring International Reports 1998). The Latvian Government also realised that amending the Citizenship Law would be one way to avoid the economic sanctions that Russia threatened to impose on Latvia if it did not make these changes to its Citizenship Law. According to President Guntis Ulmanis, the greatest problem with such *realpolitik* was that "it became clear [to us] that we had to amend our Citizenship Law under pressure from the East [i.e. Russia] and not on our own will" (Залетаев 1998).

Unlike Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania's laws on citizenship and minority rights were consistent with the expectations of the international community right from the start. The Citizenship Law (1991) offered citizenship to all permanent residents of the country and the Constitution and other laws have supported minority rights. The result of this legislation was that, according to the 2001 census, 99 % of all residents had Lithuanian citizenship (Statistical Office of Estonia, Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, and Statistics of Lithuania 2003). The Constitution of Lithuania adopted in 1992 guarantees cultural minority rights and prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity. It allows Lithuania's ethnic minorities to foster their language, culture, and customs, and grants minorities the right to administer their affairs, independent of the State, in the areas of culture, education and organisations.

These decisions were praised by the CoE, the EU and other international organisations.⁷ In fact, some international actors went as far as to suggest that Lithuania's approach to political community building emphasised "multiculturalism and minority rights" (Resler 1997: 102). However, as in Latvia and Estonia, the discussions about the status and needs of the local Polish minority (as well as other minorities) often were hostage to geopolitical considerations and nationalist impulses. There were outbursts of ethnic insecurity, which manifested themselves in the desire to preserve the Lithuanian language and fears concerning the "uncertain loyalty" of ethnic Poles.

⁷ The international response to Lithuania's Citizenship Law is described in Popovski (2000: 69-70).

A number of issues caused tension at domestic and international levels. These issues included the accreditation of a Polish university in Vilnius, the interpretation of the interwar events in eastern Lithuania, and the proposed redrawing of regional boundaries to expand the region that included Vilnius (which was perceived by some ethnic Poles as an attempt to upset the “ethnic balance” in eastern Lithuania).⁸ These questions were addressed during negotiations between Poland and Lithuania, both of whom in the early 1990s wanted to join North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and were aware of the fact that NATO did not want to import tensions from its prospective members.

The prospect of a treaty of friendship with Poland prompted protests and the gathering of signatures against the treaty in Vilnius. Many *Vilnija* activists argued that after the treaty was signed the Poles would be interested in teaching their language in eastern Lithuania, which would eventually lead to “re-Polonisation”. Opponents of the treaty also urged the Lithuanian Government to demand that Lithuanians living in Poland be guaranteed the same minority rights as Poles living in Lithuania. The need to maintain the territorial integrity of the young Lithuanian State and the need to deal with those who “espouse the ideas of (Polish) autonomy” were brought up during the discussions as well (Varšuvos radijas 1993).

Passions and conflicting historical memories about the pre-war period did not prevent the Lithuanian and Polish governments from signing the treaty required for NATO membership. The Good Neighborhood Treaty was finally signed in April 1994, after successful lobbying by Jan Widacki, Poland’s Ambassador to Lithuania, and a series of articles and speeches by prominent public figures, such as Czesław Milosz, Zbigniew Brzeżinski, Adam Michnik, Tomas Venclova and even Pope John Paul II (BNS 1993).

The Treaty included a suggestion to rethink ethnic belonging as voluntary belonging. It defined the Polish ethnic minority in Lithuania as:

persons who have Lithuanian citizenship, are of Polish origin or consider themselves to belong to the Polish nationality, culture and traditions as well as viewing the Polish language as their native language...

Part 3 of Article 13 explicitly stated that “no one should be forced to prove his or her ethnic identity or denounce it” (Good Neighborhood Treaty 1998). This part of the agreement secured the right of Lithuania’s Poles to resist “Lithuanisation.”

Public discussions of the Polish–Lithuanian Treaty contributed to the popular perception of ethnic Poles as a “demanding” minority in Lithuania.

⁸ A “Polish” university existed in eastern Lithuania, but it was not officially recognised by the Lithuanian Government.

According to an often cited analysis of the 1990–1998 Lithuanian press, the leading Lithuanian newspapers portrayed ethnic Poles as a minority constantly demanding more cultural rights. Educational rights in general, and the demand to create a university in which all subjects would be taught through Polish in particular, became especially politicised in the Lithuanian press. The term “eastern Lithuania” became a code word associated with minority issues. The media was at least partially responsible for creating a perception that this area was very different from, and even alien to, the “real” Lithuania (Beresnevičiūtė and Nausėdienė 1999: 71).

Minority rights issues were often discussed during regular meetings between the two States. By 1997, Poland and Lithuania had created numerous intergovernmental institutions, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of Lithuania and Poland, the Government Cooperation Council of Lithuania and Poland, and the Advisory Committee of the Presidents of Lithuania and Poland. These institutions, however, although quite successful in building trust between Poland and Lithuania at the interstate level, could do little to address the concerns of ethnic Poles living in Lithuania and ethnic Lithuanians living in Poland. The treatment of ethnic minorities was constantly raised by politicians on both sides, but no solution was found for contentious issues involving language. In the words of Jerzy Buzek, a former Prime Minister of Poland, “the problems [related to] ethnic minorities still remain a cause of tension and doubt” (Bruveris 1999). The loyalty of ethnic Poles to the Lithuanian State was constantly questioned, and often this ethnic group was portrayed as being more loyal to Poland than to Lithuania. Ethnic Poles were seen as poorly integrated into Lithuanian society. For example, in 2004 Rolandas Paksas was impeached and removed from office, and Kazimiera Prunskienė, a leading politician supported by Paksas, was strongly supported in eastern Lithuania in the presidential election. *Lietuvos Rytas* (2004), the leading Lithuanian daily, made the following comments about the results of the presidential election:

It is clear that it is difficult to talk about the integration of ethnic Poles and ethnic Russians into Lithuania’s (political) life. Probably one reason for this phenomenon is the Soviet legacy — the education system, allowing ethnic minorities to act as if they were living not in Lithuania, but next to the Lithuanian state.

This represents the dominant view among ethnic Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians on the problems related to ethnic relations in the Baltic States. They are seen as a legacy of the region’s Soviet past, unrelated to the birth pains of the new democracies in the late 1980s and 1990s. Such beliefs, coupled with the conviction that the nations were weakened by the Soviet

nationalities policy and, in the case of Latvia and Estonia, international intervention, are likely to inspire calls from time to time to “strengthen” the nations.

Revised in 1996, Lithuania’s Citizenship Law attempted to strengthen the ethnic nation by allowing persons of Lithuanian origin (ethnic Lithuanians) to retain their citizenship, even if they had become permanent residents of another nation state. A new Citizenship Law, adopted in 2002, signalled a similar move towards ethnic democracy. This law was adopted under pressure from both the “old” (post-Second World War) and “new” (post-1991) Lithuanian diasporas in the West. According to this law, ethnic Lithuanians and the citizens of the pre-war Republic and their descendants were permitted to retain their Lithuanian citizenship even if they resided in another State (Republic of Lithuania 2002). While the Law allowed dual citizenship, these provisions applied primarily to ethnic Lithuanians, not to ethnic Russians or ethnic Poles. Under criticism from local activists and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (part of the CoE), the law was declared unconstitutional by Lithuania’s Supreme Court in November 2006.

The creation of integration programmes prior to European Union accession

To alleviate the fears of ethnic Estonians, while at the same time reiterating its willingness to adjust to the democratic norms of inclusiveness, the Estonian Government, in February 1998, adopted the Estonian National Integration Policy. This policy, which was drafted under the leadership of Andrea Veidemann of the Progressive Party at a time when left-wing and centrist political parties were in power, included a statement underlining the importance of “the serious effort [by non-Estonians] to study the Estonian language” (Veidemann 1998).

On the one hand, given its emphasis on language, this policy continued the Restorationist paradigm. On the other hand, it represented a change in the official national discourse. The Integration Policy started to focus on goals and specific strategies instead of spontaneously responding to the suggestions of international actors. When Andrea Veidemann, then a Minister without a portfolio dealing with population and ethnic affairs, presented the draft Policy of Integration to Parliament in May 1998, she argued that accelerated naturalisation, improved Estonian language skills, and better political integration into Estonian politics were specific goals for Estonia’s Russian speakers. Domestically, the programme was criticised for its vague

notions of “integration”, but this vagueness may have been a way of avoiding pressure from nationalist groups (Jurado 2003: 417). In any case, in 1998, the official discourse about the integration of non-citizens into Estonia’s political community was different from the Restorationist rhetoric of the early 1990s when the Restorationists treated the “Soviet immigrants” as strangers to the Estonian political community (Jarve 2000). At the same time, there was a strong focus on Estonian language teaching, which was meant to alleviate fears about the possible extinction of the Estonian nation.

In March 2000, the Estonian Government approved a seven-year programme to promote the integration of non-Estonians into Estonian society. This time, “integration” was defined as a bilateral process that included the participation of both Estonians and Russian speakers. The participants in this process had the right to preserve their ethnic identities, but at the same time, they were united by a common goal — “the harmonisation of society”. The future Estonia was described as a multicultural country with a “strong common core” and the “preservation and development of the Estonian cultural domain”. This “common core” consisted of “general human and democratic values”, the Estonian language, common State institutions, and knowledge of Estonian history (Government of Estonia 2000). The Estonian language was described as an “attribute to statehood”, not as an ethnic symbol. (In the past, Russian politicians had criticised the Estonians for treating language as a symbol of their common past.⁹

Interestingly, “integration” was described as having different meanings in the eyes of Estonians and Russian speakers (who were identified as “non-Estonians” in the programme). For Russian speakers, integration was defined as the ability to compete successfully in the labour market and to participate in local cultural and political life. For Estonians, integration involved “the retreat of repellent attitudes toward ethnic minorities” and “the decrease in fear concerning the survival of the national identity and cultural domain”. This description implies that one of the major aims of the programme was to achieve national reconciliation. Ethnic groups were expected to be tolerant and to be united by knowledge of Estonian history, although there were no hints in the programme as to which parts of Estonian history everyone should know and how this knowledge could be unifying.

A major goal of the programme was to preserve the survival of the Estonian nation: “Estonian society is multi-cultural ... for everyone Estonia is and will remain Estonia-centered in the sense of a common cultural domain”, and this could be achieved by promoting the Estonian language (Government of Estonia 2000). Thus, Estonian language teaching (“linguistic communicative integration”) received much more attention and financing than socio-economic

⁹ For a critique of Estonian views on language, see Семенов (1996: 38).

integration geared at improving the economic well-being of Russian speakers. In fact, 81 % of the 2000 programme budget was dedicated to the teaching of the Estonian language to Russian speakers (Feldman 2003: 562).

The international community was involved in the development of this programme. There was an academic conference in Tallinn in 1999, during which Western academics, including Will Kymlicka, presented their views on the programme. According to Mati Luik (2004) from the Integration Foundation:

Although the link from scientific research to policy-making is always indirect, the key points of the 1999 conference presentations were taken into consideration in the final formulation of the concept of Estonia's integration policy.

During the same year, Western diplomats and ambassadors were invited to a discussion on the draft of the programme. However, at this early stage their input was minimal (Feldman 2003: 566). Later, Estonia received generous foreign aid to implement the programme in general, and to expand the teaching of the Estonian language in particular. The EU Phare Programme, the UN Development Programme, the Governments of Canada, the United States of America, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and many other countries helped to finance the programme, thus strengthening the Estonian nation state and its self-confidence. The EU allocated an impressive sum — EUR 1.4 million — to finance the programme (Pettai 2001: 274). After December 1999, the European Union supported Estonia's citizenship policy and its decision to remove barriers to naturalisation, but it also encouraged the country to come up with ways to speed up naturalisation.¹⁰ (The naturalisation rate was especially high in the mid-1990s as a result of the Russian Army withdrawal in 1994 and the signing of the association agreement by the Estonian Government with the EU in 1995; it started to decline in 1997.)

In 2000, Estonia made several minor changes to its Citizenship Law, making naturalisation easier for people with disabilities and young people who had passed Estonian language exams in school. In December 2003, the Estonian Parliament amended the Language and Citizenship Laws once again,

¹⁰ According to the 2000 Regular Report on Estonia from the Commission on Estonia's Progress towards Accession, "Estonia needs to continue efforts as regards the integration of non-citizens, reinforcing the capacity of the public administration" (Commission of the European Communities 2000). According to the 2001 Regular Report (pp. 21–22), "the rate of naturalization has been decreasing significantly over the past few years. [...] It is important that those people who have previously passed language tests for the purposes of naturalization under the old system should not have to retake those tests" (Commission of the European Communities 2001). The need to "increase the speed of procedures" and ensure that the process was efficient was mentioned in both the 2002 Regular Report and the 2003 Regular Report (Commission of the European Communities 2002, 2003).

making language courses for successful citizenship applicants basically free of charge (BBC Monitoring International Reports 2003). In 2003, information campaigns were launched, the application process was shortened, and a new television series to teach Estonian was even created (McConnell 2003).

The ability of the Estonian nation state to “nationalise” was probably strengthened by EU membership because the EU and other international actors gave support to Estonian language training programmes. Surveys sponsored by the Estonian State Integration Foundation, which have been conducted since 2000, have found that the focus of the articles read by Estonia’s Russian speakers has shifted from discussions on minority rights to discussions on how to master the Estonian language.¹¹ It is difficult to find a good job and to use the State as a “service station” successfully without knowing Estonian. Many local Russian speakers started seeing Estonia as a good “service station.”¹² At the same time, more Estonians started seeing the local Russian speakers as a resource, not as a potential threat, which suggests that their ethnic fear declined.¹³ International observers have described the Estonian integration strategy as “one of the best in Europe at targeting specific education and employment needs” (Huddleston, Niessen, Ní Chaoimh and White 2011: 70).

However, one major challenge — how to improve the political participation of all of Estonia’s residents — remains. Although many Russian speakers decided to become Estonian citizens, they did not create a united political party that could express the interests of all of Estonia’s Russian speakers. No Russian parties were represented in the first Parliament in 1992, but in 1995 several Russian political parties (most notably, the Russian Party of Estonia and the United Russian People’s Party) came into being.

In 1995 and 1999, the Russian parties managed to create electoral blocs and gain seats in Parliament, but their alliances were short lived. Once elected to Parliament, individual Russian politicians started voting with the Estonian lawmakers. In the 2003 election, despite the increasing naturalisation rate, the most successful Russian party in Estonia, the United Russian

¹¹ This is one of the conclusions of the Integration Monitoring Media Surveys (2002) sponsored by the State Integration Foundation. The monitoring surveys also suggest that in 2002 44 % of Estonia’s Russian speakers thought that their Estonian language skills were “sufficient” to live in Estonia. Ten years earlier, only 24 % thought so (Estonian State Integration Foundation 2002).

¹² According to the findings of public opinion surveys conducted in 1989, 1990, 1993 and 1996, the attitudes of Estonia’s Russian speakers toward the Estonian nation state had been gradually improving. See Ott, Kirch and Kirch (1996), Kirch (1997).

¹³ In 1994, 41 % of Estonians saw Russian speakers as a resource to promote business and 57 % saw them as a resource for developing business contacts between the East and the West. In 2000, these numbers were 67 % and 88 %. See Kruusvall (2002: 127).

People's Party, won only 2.2 % of the vote and did not gain representation in Parliament. Several Estonian parties, especially the Centre Party then led by Edgar Savisaar, who was Estonia's Prime Minister in 1990–1992, and the pro-market Reform Party, tried to attract Russian politicians and Russian voters by promising to solve the problem of statelessness.

“A willingness to accept Latvian as the State language” (by Russian speakers) was identified as a major goal for the future political community in a framework document adopted by the Latvian Government on its way to the European Union in December 1999 (Government of Latvia 1999). The final version of this document, the National Programme for the Integration of Society in Latvia, adopted in 2001, reiterated the same principle (Government of Latvia 2001). The framework document also called for “understanding among diverse groups who have to work together for the benefit of one country” (Government of Latvia 1999). A year later, the national programme for integration, called for a dialogue between individuals and the State, better information regarding naturalisation, stronger civil society, and “strengthening the role of the Latvian language as a means of integration” (Government of Latvia 2001).

At the same time, as in Estonia, the Government tried to make the process of naturalisation easier. From 1995 to 2003, approximately 70,000 people became naturalised citizens of Latvia. In comparison, more than 76,000 people became naturalised citizens in Estonia during the same period. In mid-2004, 481,352, or one-fifth of Latvia's residents (compared with 28 % in 1991), still did not have citizenship, which suggests that the process of naturalisation remained slow.

The focus on the preservation of national language in the National Programme for the Integration of Society in Latvia (2001) was similar to Estonia's programme on integration. Unlike in Estonia, Latvia's integration programme (both the framework document and the national programme, approved in 2001) included references to the country's Soviet past. The framework document and the national programme for integration in Latvia portrayed non-citizens as part of the legacy of 50 years of totalitarianism and occupation:

Latvia has inherited more than half a million Soviet era immigrants and their descendants, many of whom have not yet become integrated into the Latvian cultural and linguistic environment, and thus do not feel connected to the Latvian state (Government of Latvia 1999: 4).

The documents outlined the “historical conditions affecting integration”, which included references to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, Second World War, and the deportations and political repression carried out under Stalin — sensitive issues in Latvian–Russian relations. Soviet policies and actions were

described as colonisation. They explicitly called for the condemnation of the Soviet period so that “the historical consciousness of ethnic groups, especially in the younger generation, does not become an obstacle to the integration process” (Government of Latvia 1999: 6–7). They also asserted that “the Latvian people did not voluntarily choose the Soviet regime and life in a totalitarian system; this must be understood”, thus suggesting that this was the right way to interpret Latvia’s history, and that it should be followed in history education (Government of Latvia 1999: 7).

A willingness to mention and evaluate the Soviet past suggests that Latvia’s national integration programme was more ambitious than Estonia’s. The Estonians decided to keep national integration (i.e. the normalisation of ethnic relations) and coming to terms with the past separate. It appears that the Latvians, fearing the creation of a two-community state, decided that addressing the past must become part of the official discourse about nation building. The nationalist parties, such as *Tēvzemei un Brīvībai* (For Fatherland and Freedom), insisted that references to the past be made. In fact, the representatives of this political party argued that the programme did not include an adequately strong condemnation of the colonisation policy carried out by the USSR. More liberal Latvian politicians thought that while history should not be forgotten, it should not become the main force shaping future policies.¹⁴

The framework document, which was available for public discussion in 1999, argued that:

The current predicament of the Latvian language reflects the complicated political, economic, ethno-demographic and psychological processes, which have taken place during the course of history in Latvia. [...] Russian is the native language for many members of minority groups in Latvia (Government of Latvia 1999).

This statement described the legacy of the Soviet nationalities policy in Latvia, which led to a decline in the use of the Latvian language. To overcome this legacy, the framework document proposed creating a unified educational system. In practice, this meant that more teaching in State-supported Russian-language schools would have to take place in Latvian. The framework document asserted that Latvian had to be the official State language, although the languages of minorities could be “cultivated in harmony with law”.

Latvia’s Russian political and social activists criticised Latvia’s integration programme for its perceived attempts at “assimilation” (Pabriks & Purs 2002: 79). For example, in April 1999, when heated public debates on integration were taking place, Oleg Gotsulyak, a member of the Russian com-

¹⁴ The two sides were engaged in a bitter debate in the Latvian newspaper Diena in October and December 1999. For a summary of this debate, see Broks, Tabuns and Tabuna (2001: 193–194).

munity, suggested that by reforming minority education and promoting the use of Latvian, the Latvian Government did not intend to protect minority rights (*Diena* 1999). Vladimir Buzayev, a prominent member of *Ravno-praviye* (Equal Rights), argued that it was difficult for Russian speakers to make compromises and accept integration (*Diena* 1999). The Latvians and Russian speakers saw both the past and the future in different ways, which made national integration difficult.

Different understandings of the Russian-speaking minority's language rights also made national integration difficult. Following the directions outlined by the programme on integration, the Latvian Parliament and the Latvian Government decided to reform minority education by increasing the number of classes taught in Latvian at State-run Russian secondary schools.¹⁵ In 2003–2004, this decision prompted many protests by Russia, resistance from Latvia's non-governmental organisations and politicians who supported the rights of Russian speakers, along with mass demonstrations "to protect the rights of the Russian community". This time, the EU, the OSCE, and the CoE expressed support for the decision of the Latvian Government to pursue the reform, admitting that Latvia's laws on language and education were in line with the standards outlined by the OSCE and the CoE (Kalmīns 2004). However, international support did not eliminate the tensions related to the implementation of the reform. Latvia's nationality policies are considered to be the "weakest in Europe", and political participation of non-nationals remains an area requiring improvement (Huddleston et al. 2011: 121).

Latvia's Russian speakers, most of whom were still non-citizens in 2004,¹⁶ and ethnic Latvians tended to support different political parties. In 1994, when debates regarding the Citizenship Law took place, unlike the heirs to the Popular Front who favoured restrictions on who received citizenship, Equal Rights, which consisted mostly of Russian speakers, proposed giving citizenship to all permanent residents. Different political choices became more pronounced after 1999. According to a survey conducted before the 2002 parliamentary elections, more than 80 % of Russian speakers intended to vote for

¹⁵ According to Nils Muiznieks, Minister for Special Assignments for Society Integration Affairs, Parliament adopted an Education Law in 1998 with the goal of increasing Latvian language skills in minority schools. According to this law, 60 % of classes in minority secondary schools had to be taught in Latvian starting in 2004 and 40 % of classes had to be taught in Russian. The OSCE and the CoE confirmed that this solution was in line with international standards on minority rights (Muiznieks 2003). Despite protests from non-governmental groups, Parliament confirmed its decision in February 2004.

¹⁶ According to the register of inhabitants (1 January 2004) released by the Department of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, out of a total of 818,145 Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians, 364,206 (44.52 %) were Latvian citizens. (Department of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, handout: Information received directly from the Department of Citizenship and Migration Affairs).

a political party coalition called For Human Rights in a United Latvia, FHRUL (Auers 2002/2003). This coalition was known for its fierce opposition to Latvia's minority education reform and its pro-Russian (and anti-Western) orientation. The FHRUL won 25 (out of 100) seats in Parliament — more than any pro-minority party had ever won before in post-Soviet Latvia. Unlike in Estonia, where the influence of Russian political parties declined in 1995–2004, the popularity of political parties claiming to support the interests of Russian speakers in Latvia increased. In 1998, when the FHRUL was created, it managed to win 16 seats (out of 100) in Parliament. In 2002, the FHRUL won 25 seats. According to data gathered in February 2005, the FHRUL was very popular at the local level. For example, it was the second most popular political party in Riga (LETA 2005).

Despite the inclusive Citizenship Law, there is some support for ethno-political parties in Lithuania, especially at the local level, and it tends to increase when issues related to minority rights such as education become politicised. As discussed earlier, in the early and mid-1990s, issues such as the accreditation of a Polish university in Vilnius, the interpretation of interwar events in eastern Lithuania, and the proposed redrawing of regional boundaries to expand the region that included Vilnius, became politicised and gained prominence not only at the national level, but at the international level as well (bilateral Lithuanian–Polish relations). These developments coincided with an increased support for the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (*Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija*, LLRA) at the local level. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the political salience of these issues subsided, as the politicians at the national level focused their attention on gaining EU membership. In 1995, the LLRA received 69 (4.64 %) seats in the local councils, 58 (3.84 %) in 1997, 53 (3.39 %) in 2000, and 50 (3.21 %) in 2002 (Jurkynas 2004: 288).

Programmes geared toward national integration that were developed prior to 2004, such as Eastern Lithuania's Regional Programs for Social Development, 1996-2000 and 1996-2003 (Government of Lithuania 1996, 2000) and Conception of Ethnic Policy (Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad 2002) attempted to address the cultural and social aspects of integration. These two programmes embraced different ideologies.

The Conception of Ethnic Policy attempted to introduce principles that are associated with a multi-ethnic nation state. It identified the need to develop one national meta-narrative instead of dividing the cultural legacy into “ours” and “yours”, recommended that the law protecting ethnic Lithuanian culture be changed to make it into a law protecting the cultures of ethnic minorities, and suggested that the dual citizenship outlined in the 2002 Citizenship Law be made available to members of other ethnicities, not just Lithuanians. This

document was criticised by parliamentarians on both the left and the right for allegedly embracing the model of a multi-ethnic nation state instead of a nation state reserved for one nation. The ideas presented in the conception did not receive the political support necessary to carry out cultural change.

In contrast, Eastern Lithuania's Regional Programs for Social Development, 1996-2000 and 1996-2003, which was adopted by the Lithuanian Government in July 1996, included principles associated with ethnic democracies. It embraced the belief that the educational system should "help the representatives of minorities to integrate into Lithuanian society". The programme clearly stated the perceived need to create more Lithuanian-language schools in the minority-majority areas, thus reinvigorating the temptation to "re-Lithuanise" these areas. Similar to Latvia, the Lithuanian programme included references to historical memory. Specifically, it claimed that it was "necessary to develop Lithuanian citizens' consciousness, [and] to revive the historical memory of the Lithuanian state" (Government of Lithuania 1996). As in Latvia and Estonia, the Lithuanian Government at that time realised the need to emphasise economic development in the minority-majority districts — that is, to make sure that the State functioned smoothly as a "service station". The programmes outlined many issues, such as the economic disparities between eastern Lithuania and the rest of the country (according to the programmes, the average personal income in eastern Lithuania was 16 % less than similar income in the rest of the country), the lack of foreign investment, and lower agricultural productivity. The programme proposed a solution — to make sure that the social development of regions in eastern Lithuania should be a priority for the Lithuanian Government. This was a lofty goal, and it still remains to be implemented.

Conclusions

The case studies presented in this article illustrate both the positive and negative aspects of international attempts to increase political inclusiveness in the Baltic States. On the one hand, such attempts helped to improve the environment necessary to create tolerant political communities by pressuring the emerging nation states to revise their citizenship laws and to adopt legislation protecting minority rights. On the other hand, resistance to international attempts to increase political inclusiveness should not be ignored.

In the three cases, one of the most salient variables that affected political community building was traumatic historical memory and a prevalent myth about the weakness of the nation, which was conceptualised as a living being. Some important political actors, as outlined in the case studies, have inter-

preted international attempts to increase political inclusiveness as a threat to the “weakened” nations. Such discourse, coupled with an image of the nation as a fighting and suffering hero, creates an exclusive memory regime which is a powerful obstacle to the creation of open and tolerant political communities.

Such memory regimes are especially vulnerable to competing victimhoods — the situation when a minority (or minorities) within the nation state put forward their own narrative of fighting and suffering. The clashes over the relocation of the Red Army monument in Tallinn in 2007 and subsequent violence is a case in point. When the Estonian Government decided to remove the Bronze soldier from the centre of Tallinn, the “crisis” spiralled out of control. This political decision led not only to national but also to international tensions, with the EU Commission and the Russian Government becoming involved. The internationalisation of this conflict revealed the power of politicised historical memory in divided societies and the ease with which ethnic fears can be revived. Not surprisingly, the incident raised questions about the loyalty of Estonia’s Russians (some of whom embrace a radically different interpretation of the Second World War) to the Estonian nation state.

During the current (2011) Lithuanian–Polish conflict over education, similar questions about the loyalty of Lithuania’s Poles to the Lithuanian State have been raised. In March 2011, the Lithuanian Government decided to revise its Education Law by expanding the number of subjects to be taught in Lithuanian. In addition, it was proposed to make the Lithuanian language exam the same for ethnic Lithuanians and minorities. This policy change was severely criticised by Lithuania’s Polish activists who argued that the proposed changes were too sudden; that knowledge of Lithuanian as a first language should be evaluated differently than Lithuanian as an official State language. This protest was conceived as potential disloyalty to the Lithuanian State (even President Dalia Grybauskaitė argued that Lithuania’s ethnic minorities, like other citizens, should be “loyal to the state in which they live” (BNS 2011). Similar to the Estonian “Bronze soldier incident”, the relatively minor conflict became internationalised, with top Polish politicians, including Prime Minister Donald Tusk, visiting Lithuania and asserting their support for Lithuania’s Polish minority. Arguably, the internationalisation of the conflict added fuel to competing victimhood and “othering” discourses portraying Lithuania’s Poles as a demanding and disloyal minority.

Tracing the initial process of political community building during the late 1980s and early 1990s sheds light on today’s identity politics, which is based on competing victimhoods. The instinct to “strengthen” the nation is one of the main obstacles to the creation of tolerant political communities. In addition, it is a source of resistance to intense international involvement, which is likely to result in unintended consequences such as residual ethnic fear and deeper ethnic divisions.

The Baltic cases suggest that pragmatic inclusiveness (i.e. adaptation to international pressure) does not automatically mean full minority empowerment. In the three cases, political participation and minority representation in power structures, especially at the national level, remain areas for improvement. This observation as well as the analysis of the integration documents produced by the Governments of the three Baltic States suggests that legislation created to improve political inclusiveness is less efficient if it is not accompanied by cultural change. “The democratization of history”, which implies the willingness of the State and society to open up spaces for alternative narratives about the past, and challenges the one “infallible” national meta-narrative, may be one necessary condition for such a change.

Theoretically, these case studies raise questions about the ways in which international norms are transmitted and especially about the role of traumatic memory during such transmissions. The Baltic case studies clearly show that norm transmission does not occur in a vacuum, and that local actors play a major role in interpreting, resisting, boycotting or adopting norms.

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Nuo etninės baimės iki pragmatiškos įtraukties? Politinės bendruomenės kūrimas Baltijos šalyse (1988-2004)

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S A N T R A U K A : Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas politinės visuomenės kūrimasis Lietuvoje, Latvijoje ir Estijoje nuo Atgimimo iki įstojimo į Europos Sąjungą, analizuojamos tarptautinių organizacijų ir kitų tarptautinių veikėjų intervencijos (pastangos paveikti politiką, susijusią su mažumų įtraukimu į politinę sferą) ir atsakomosios reakcijos, apžvelgiamos nacionalinės integracijos programos. Straipsnis remiasi medžiaga, pateikta knygoje *Taming Nationalism? Political Community Building in the Baltic States* (Nacionalizmo „prisijaukinimas“? Politinės visuomenės kūrimas Baltijos valstybėse, 2005). Straipsnio tikslas – priminti apie nesenus istorinius įvykius šiuolaikinių etninių įtampų kontekste.

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